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Akin Says Supreme Court Ruling on Religious Scholarships "Smacks of Bigotry Against Religion"

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today's 7-2 Supreme Court decision to deny state scholarship funds to a student studying for the ministry reflects "insulting judicial arrogance and antipathy toward people of faith," U.S. Rep. Todd Akin (R-MO) said in responding to the ruling.

The Supreme Court's decision was an affirmation of a Washington State Supreme Court ruling that a young man named Joshua Davey could not receive scholarship funds from the State of Washington.

"Citizens of Washington State pay taxes to a scholarship fund. When Joshua Davey applied to this fund to pay for his education, the Court decided to deny the request. This decision has placed the Court in the position of picking occupations, endorsing only certain types of careers and censoring certain educational choices.

"This version of political correctness is alien to hundreds of years of American jurisprudence and unsupportable in light of our Declaration of Independence and Constitution. If this ruling was applied retroactively, none of our nation's founders could have used such a scholarship to attend Harvard, Yale, Princeton or many of our greatest colleges because they were seminaries. This would have astonished them." Akin continued.

"Providing a state scholarship to a young person pursuing a faith-oriented course of study is not government sponsorship of religion. An academic scholarship is simply that, a financial resource to enable students to study a given discipline.

Akin also noted that the Supreme Court based its decision on what commonly is known as a "Blaine Amendment," a 19th century measure added to 37 state constitutions to prevent state assistance to Catholic institutions.

"Instead of striking down a sad relic of anti-Catholic bigotry, the Court instead has used this crude instrument to apply bigotry to the broad spectrum of religion. Most advocates of human dignity and religious freedom would fail to see this as progress.

"I will carefully evaluate the best course to take in Congress to assure the Court that my colleagues and I are mindful of this attack on personal and religious freedom and intend to reverse it," Akin concluded.